

Minutes

Northern Transport Forum Meeting

Meeting Type: Northern Transport Forum

Meeting held on: 6 February 2024

Attendees: Brian Stewart, Chair
Christine Abraham, Co-Chair
Richard Bull, DCO Lead, Sizewell C
Isaak Manolis, Project Manager AD1, Sizewell C
John Craddock, Project Manager AD3, Sizewell C
Chris Heaney, Transport Co-ordinator Sizewell C
Jez Porter, SPM Associated Development Highways SZC
John Hicks, Technical Director WSP
Rebecca Calder, Community Environment Manger, SZC
Marjorie Barnes, Head of READ, Sizewell C
Richard Knight, Senior Community Relations Manager, SZC
Zoe Botten, Community Relations Manager, Sizewell C
Cllr Christine Redgrave, Darsham Parish Council
Cllr Ian Patterson, Yoxford Parish Council
Cllr Traci Weaver, Kelsale-cum-Carlton PC
Sharon Smith, Saxmundham TC
Cllr Andrew Turner, Westleton PC
Cllr Charles Macdowell, Middleton-cum-Fordley PC
Cllr Paul Collins, Theberton and Eastbridge PC
Cllr Barry Rowing, Peasenhall PC
Cllr Matthew Saunders, Blythburgh PC
Cllr Alexander Nicoll, Suffolk County Council
Steve Merry, Suffolk County Council
Cllr Paul Ashton, East Suffolk Council
Cllr Julia Ewart, East Suffolk Council
Carolyn Barnes, East Suffolk Council

Apologies: None received

Meeting Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Apologies for Absence

Purpose of the Forum – Terms of Reference



Northern Transport Forum Meeting

- Project Progress Overview**
- Updates**
- Q&A via Town and Parish Council Representative**
- Chair’s Concluding Remarks**
- Date of Next Meeting**
- Close**

Meeting Minutes – 06/02/24

Minute Ref	Actions/Comments	Who	By when
	Welcome and Introductions		
1			
1.01	Brian Stewart opened the meeting at 19.00 and welcomed the attendees.		
1.02	Richard Bull explained that, although the deed of obligation stated that the Northern Transport Forum should be chaired by a representative of the Sizewell C project team, Brian Stewart would chair the meeting as an independent chair. This inconsistency would be resolved after the meeting.		
1.03	Cllr Collins noted that some parish councils had not been invited. Richard Bull stated that the attendee list would be updated.	Richard Bull	
1.04	Brian Stewart outlined the required safety information and introduced the second independent chair, Christine Abraham. The meeting was in public but was not a public meeting.		
2	Purpose of the Forum – Terms of Reference		
2.01	Richard Knight explained that the schedule of forums for 2024 had been published on the website. The Main Development Site Forum had met in January; the Southern Transport Forum would meet next week. The purpose of the Northern Transport Forum was to provide updates on developments north of Saxmundham. Actions would be taken back via review groups, with working groups implementing recommendations. There were working groups for B1125/B1122, Yoxford, Leiston, and Rights of Way.		
3	Project Progress Overview		
3.01	Marjorie Barnes explained that the development consent order (DCO) had been triggered at the beginning of 2024. Members of local communities were encouraged to visit the Leiston office. Triggering the DCO enabled the forums to convene and some construction work to begin.		
3.02	Cllr Macdowell noted the lack of a working group for the Sizewell link road. He asked at which forum such questions would be addressed. Richard Bull stated that transport-related questions should be addressed through Transport Forums; however, such questions could also be asked at other forum meetings if required.		
3.03	Cllr Collins suggested that there should be a B1122 corridor repurposing working group once the Sizewell link road was in place. Richard Bull agreed. It would be appropriate to include representation from all related parishes.		



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4	Updates		
4.01	Update from the Transport Review Group Chris Heaney explained that the Transport Review Group was one of five review groups. The group met every quarter and received a monitoring report. Minutes, agendas and reports would be published on the East Suffolk Council website.		
4.02	HGV Management Jez Porter explained that the Construction Traffic Management Plan included prescribed routes for HGVs. There was a cap of 600 movements per day. A vehicle monitoring system was in place, with data reviewed by the Transport Review Group.		
4.03	Cllr Saunders asked what monitoring would be undertaken. Jez Porter stated that all vehicles over 3.5 tonnes were monitored using a data scope system. Chris Heaney added that the Transport Review Group would receive monitoring reports based on automatic traffic counts. Richard Bull stated that car movements were controlled by designated use of the Park and Ride sites and restricted availability of parking spaces at the Main Site.		
4.04	Cllr Saunders was of the view that a large proportion of traffic would not be monitored. Cllr Weaver noted that goods vehicles weighing less than 3.5 tonnes would be booked, so it should be possible to monitor them. Richard Bull stated that more clarity could be provided on the likely number of goods vehicles weighing less than 3.5 tonnes.		
4.05	Cllr Patterson asked about speed controls for vehicles on B1122. Jez Porter stated that there were speed limit signs. A study was underway on other potential traffic calming measures that could be implemented in addition to the B1122 Early Years scheme. The tracking systems for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes did not poll often enough to determine vehicle speed along a specific route. Cllr Saunders noted that speed detection software was widely available.		
4.06	Cllr Nicoll highlighted the need for detailed tracking of all goods vehicles, as well as information about prescribed routes and enforcement powers. Marjorie Barnes stated that everyone working on the project signed a code of conduct setting out clear expectations for workforce behaviour. Lessons had been learned from the Hinkley Point project. All employees and delivery drivers were expected to respect local communities.		
4.07	Jez Porter highlighted the implementation of the countywide signage scheme. There were 50 temporary signs directing traffic towards Sizewell on appropriate routes. Cllr Saunders noted that local communities had not been consulted about the signs, some of which had negatively impacted the area. Jez Porter noted this, and stated that semi-permanent signage was due to be installed by 15 July.		
4.08	B1122 mitigation works, utilities and timelines Jez Porter highlighted the requirement to implement a noise and vibration scheme on B1122. This included a resurfacing of the road and ironworks along the route. Resurfacing work on 3.5 kilometres of carriageway would be conducted overnight between 4 March and 14 April, subject to final confirmation.		
4.09	Cllr Macdowell asked about the timetable of shifts and the impact during daytime. Jez Porter stated that a more detailed programme would be provided later this month. There was an emergency provision for temporary traffic lights. Richard Knight stated that Middleton residents would be kept informed via letter drops and forums.		



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4.10	Cllr Collins asked about other sections of B1122. Jez Porter stated that work was being finalised on a small in the vicinity of the level crossing. Cllr Saunders asked about plans to restore white lining. Jez Porter stated that white lining would be restored on the sections indicated.		
4.11	Jez Porter outlined the use of speed limits. Traffic calming measures such as vehicle messaging systems and average speed cameras were being considered.		
4.12	Cllr Saunders asked about plans to reduce the default national speed limit. Steve Merry stated that the DCO included temporary and permanent speed limit changes; for roads outside the DCO list, limits had to go through a separate legal process. There was a contingent fund to address items identified through the Transport Review Group; this did not prevent Suffolk County Council working with Sizewell C to address concerns.		
4.13	Jez Porter stated that the speed cameras on the A12 at the Friday Street junction would be brought back into service once work resumed on the Benhall Fen Meadow scheme. Archaeological mitigation works would be undertaken in H1 2024.		
4.14	Cllr Macdowell asked whether noise and vibration studies had taken place as part of the early years phase. Traffic volumes should not be increased until mitigation measures were in place. Richard Bull stated that the early years phase had begun at the point of the DCO commencing and would run until the completion of the major roads; the updated implementation plan provided further detail on phasing. The early years phase was expected to last two to three years. Steve Merry suggested sharing traffic forecasts to reassure residents.		
4.15	Cllr Patterson asked about the application for a 20mph speed limit on the B1122 through Theberton. Richard Bull stated that Sizewell C supported the 20mph limit and would work with Suffolk County Council and the police to implement it. Steve Merry stated that a decision had to be made on whether to apply for a temporary or permanent traffic regulation order. The threshold for a temporary order was lower, but it would only be valid for 18 months without a fixed end date.		
4.16	B1125 mitigation works, utilities and timelines Richard Bull stated that work on the B1125 scheme had mostly been agreed through the Working Group. Cllr Turner asked about the timelines for implementation. Richard Bull highlighted the need to fix an agreed final concept design so that the detailed design process could be completed. An update would then be provided on timelines. Cllr Turner commented that further consultations with residents were taking place and that feedback could be provided in three to four weeks.		
4.17	Cllr Saunders noted that no updates had been provided on B1125 timelines, utilities or mitigation works, despite the item being listed on the agenda. Richard Bull summarised the scheme approach to restrict traffic flow through Blythburgh and stated that options for the junction south of Blythburgh had been considered in detail through the Working Group. It had been decided that infrastructure changes would be minimal, with signage and small-scale interventions to prevent through traffic travelling north of the B1125/B1387 crossroads. The councillor was welcome to attend the next working group meeting.		
4.18	Yoxford Roundabout update timelines including AD2 schemes		



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	John Craddock explained that the Yoxford roundabout was an early years mitigation scheme to improve safety and traffic flow. The design was mostly complete and was going through the technical approval process with Suffolk County Council. Some archaeological clearance would take place. Utility diversions were being considered. The main construction was due to begin at the end of the year, with a nine-month programme expected. The tie-ins to the A12 would be carefully managed to minimise disruption.		
4.19	Sizewell link road John Craddock reported that work with Suffolk County Council on the detailed design was ongoing. Significant archaeological clearance was required. Access to the rail overbridge was key. Ecology clearance would be needed. The main construction was scheduled to begin at the end of 2025, although this might be expedited. The road would ultimately be transferred to Suffolk County Council as an adoptable highway. Utility works were due to take place in advance of the main construction. In 2024, archaeological excavations would take place so that the rail bridge could be reached.		
4.20	Northern Park & Ride, overview, and approximate timescales Isaak Manolis explained that the design would be finalised in Q3 2024. Surveys would be undertaken on the site. Preparations for archaeology and vegetation clearance would take place. The main construction was due to begin in early 2025, with the site becoming fully operational in H1 2026. There would be cooperation with the rail projects and Network Rail on the Darsham level crossing upgrade.		
4.21	The Sibton councillor asked how access to the park and ride from Willow Marsh Lane would be prevented, and how Sizewell vehicles using this route would be identified. Isaak Manolis stated that road users would be advised to access the park and ride using the A12 from Yoxford or Blythburgh. Richard Bull added that there would be appropriate signage to direct vehicles. Cllr Ashton noted that people would use Willow Marsh Lane to bypass Yoxford from the west. Cllr Saunders stated that advisory signage would not be sufficient to deter vehicles; enforcement was necessary.		
4.22	Noise Mitigation Scheme, Vibration Survey Rebecca Calder explained that the scheme mirrored the government noise insulation regulations, predominantly offering secondary glazing and mechanical ventilation. Existing roads had also been included and a nighttime threshold introduced. There was a list of automatically eligible B1122 properties; other properties required refreshed noise assessments. The B1122 vibration scheme was a residential-only scheme.		
4.23	Cllr Macdowell asked why residents were unable to request cheaper alternatives. Rebecca Calder stated that secondary glazing had been deemed the most effective solution by an independent surveyor. Households were under no obligation to adopt the scheme, and secondary glazing could be removed. The consistency of the scheme was important.		
4.24	Cllr Collins asked why listed buildings had not been included in the vibration damage survey. Rebecca Calder stated that the properties included were those listed in the deed of obligation. Properties not included on the list would have access to other mitigations. Cllr Collins asked whether the likely impact of vibration would be measured. Rebecca Calder stated that Sizewell C had been asked to provide the vibration scheme as a precautionary measure; no vibration damage was anticipated. Refreshed noise assessments were being conducted. Parish councils had had the opportunity to comment on the list of properties. Experts had determined that further mitigation was unnecessary.		



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5	Q&A via Town and Parish Council Representative		
5.01	Cllr Redgrave asked about plans to allow residents to access the A12 from The Street in Darsham. John Craddock stated that there were currently no planned improvements to this junction. Steve Merry stated that the contingency fund could be used if the Transport Review Group identified unforeseen issues. Cllr Nicoll suggested that questions be shared with Steve Merry in advance of future Northern Transport Forum meetings. Cllr Redgrave asked about the volume of increased traffic. Chris Heaney stated that an increase of 246 vehicles on the A12 between 07.00 and 08.00 was forecast. Seasonal data would be provided at the next meeting.		
5.02	Cllr Weaver asked about coordination with other infrastructure projects. Jez Porter stated that there had been regular forums with Scottish Power, with a Scottish Power representative invited to attend the Transport Review Group. There were plans to engage with National Grid. The coordination of road space bookings to minimise impact was being considered. Cllr Weaver stated that a chart containing all SZC project timelines and completion dates would be helpful. Richard Bull agreed on the need for a Gantt chart to explain the programme of works.		
5.03	Cllr Collins stated that the Gantt chart should address the question of whether the 20mph speed limit in Theberton would be in place prior to the increase in HGV and water tanker movements. The chart should also include traffic increases.		
5.04	Cllr Macdowell asked whether the tracking system allowed vehicle records to be checked in response to speeding complaints. Jez Porter stated that the GPS element of the system did not poll enough to be used for speed enforcement. Cllr Macdowell highlighted the need for a system upgrade. Brian Stewart noted that more clarity was required on vehicle definitions. Attendees wanted reassurance on the monitoring of vehicles weighing under 3.5 tonnes.		
5.05	Cllr Rowing asked whether the noise mitigation scheme would extend to Peasenhall. Rebecca Calder stated that this was unlikely. According to the data included in the DCO, overall traffic changes would not be significant.		
5.06	Cllr Saunders asked about the timeframe for the delivery of B1125 works. Richard Bull stated that it was not possible to provide detailed timelines until the final concept design was agreed within the Working Group, but it was a priority scheme and would be delivered as soon as possible.		
5.07	Cllr Ashton invited Sizewell C representatives to a discussion on how to ensure that future Northern Transport Forum meetings were more effective.		
6	Chair's Concluding Remarks		
6.01	Brian Stewart stated that the meeting minutes would be circulated by email and published on the East Suffolk Council website.		
7	Date of Next Meeting		
7.01	Richard Knight stated that the next meeting would take place on 8 May at Stratford St Andrew Riverside Centre.		



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8	Close		
8.01	Brian Stewart closed the meeting.		